

Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group
Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2008

Summary

Epidemiology Work Group Members in Attendance (12):

Wendy Wolfersteig, Arizona Gang and Drug Prevention Resource Center; Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center, Arizona State University
Steve Gendler, Arizona Department of Public Safety
Meena Shahi, Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board, First Things First
Richard Porter, Arizona Department of Health Services
Phillip Stevenson, Chair, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
James Cunningham, University of Arizona
Gowri Shetty, Arizona Department of Health Services, Tobacco Education Prevention Program—via conference call
John Vivian, proxy for Michelle Anderson, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections—via conference call
Jody Sekerak, Indian Health Services—via conference call
Zeenat Mahal, Epidemiological Center, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
David Choate, proxy for Charles Katz, Arizona State University
Katherine Guffey, Arizona Department of Economic Security—via conference call

Epidemiology Work Group Members Absent (5)

Dennis Embry, PAXIS Institute
Wesley Kortuem, Arizona Department of Health Services
Catherine Osborn, Arizona Department of Education
Amy Stuart, Administrative Office of the Courts
Michael Dolny, Arizona Department of Corrections

Governor's Office Staff (1)

Jeanne Blackburn, (GOCYF, DSAP)

Public (3):

Richard Wood, Pima Prevention Partnership
Anne Hunter, Arizona Office of the Auditor General
Gail Spore, Arizona Department of Public Safety



Call to Order was made by Phillip Stevenson at 1:05 p.m. after noting that a quorum was present.

Welcome and Introductions

- Phillip Stevenson asked the attendees and guests present to introduce themselves and their respective agency/group.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Phillip Stevenson asked if anyone had any changes to the previous month's meeting minutes.
- As no one had any changes, Wendy Wolfersteig motioned that the meeting minutes be accepted in their current state. Richard Porter seconded the motion. When prompted, all members in attendance offered their acceptance of the motion. There were no dissenters. Meeting minutes were accepted.

Announcements

- Zeenat Mahal announced that the Native Health Research Conference will be held from August 25 – 28 in Portland, Oregon with the agenda focusing on research protocols and guidelines for conducting research on native populations.
 - Zeenat will send the conference information and agenda to Jeanne Blackburn for distribution to the group.
- Jeanne Blackburn informed the group that the Governor's Chief of Staff, Dennis Burke will be leaving his position in mid-September to explore other opportunities. She is unsure of who will chair the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) in his absence, but indicated that she will update the group when she has that information.
- The group discussed the need to adhere to Open Meeting Law, including the maintenance of a quorum. Among the questions the group had was whether the group could reschedule the meeting for another date/time if quorum could not be achieved for the regularly-scheduled meeting (i.e., the third Wednesday of the month).
 - Jeanne Blackburn indicated that provided that notification is provided to the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to ensure that the public was given the opportunity to attend and have their voice heard, another meeting could be scheduled.



Epi Deliverable: Examination of 2008 “Snapshot of Arizona” Outline and Creation of Timeline

- Jeanne Blackburn had constructed an outline of the document based on member suggestions, which she distributed at the meeting.
 - Richard Porter expressed concern that based on the outline, the 2008 Snapshot document would be too lengthy and discussed the possibility of shortening the length of the document.
 - Jeanne Blackburn reminded the group that the indicated page length is an approximation and is inclusive of several pages that are not substantive, including the title page, table of contents, work group membership roster and references. In addition, she noted that the document is created in Publisher with some space being accounted for by images, headers, etc. and that with the information provided in topic-specific chapters, readers could skip the sections about which they have no interest.
 - Phillip Stevenson asked Richard Porter and the remainder of the group whether the data they have seen indicate that any sections of the report (based on the outline) could be omitted given the intended use of the document.
 - Phillip Stevenson asked David Choate whether the AARIN data make any such indications.
 - David responded that the AARIN data indicate that we can omit the section in the outline on heroin use.
 - Jeanne Blackburn suggested making a note in the report indicating that while there has been anecdotal evidence in the news, etc. indicating a rise in heroin use, the data have not yet indicated that it appears to be a problem.
 - David Choate indicated that if there is a rise in use, the people using are not being arrested in Maricopa County as the AARIN data are not showing a rise in heroin use among the incarcerated population in Maricopa County.
 - Meena Shahi suggested examining the treatment data for admissions for heroin abuse to determine if there is an increase in heroin users seeking treatment.
 - Richard Porter asked whether the group has chosen alcohol and methamphetamine as the topics for the substance-specific chapters for a political reason (because of the Underage Drinking and Anti-Methamphetamine committees of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership) or for another reason.
 - Phillip Stevenson responded that he felt that the inclusion of these particular areas was due to the Work Group's efforts to bring to bear the relevant data on the issues of concern to Arizona and that as substance abuse concerns change in Arizona (and the data reflect that), that these areas may change. However, for now, he suggests focusing on these areas.
 - Richard Porter indicated that the length of the document could also be shortened by synthesizing the information into the most pertinent information, keeping the narrative to a minimum.



- James Cunningham asked the group that, given that the report was done once before, whether asking the end users of the previous product what was useful and what could be changed might be helpful in the creation of this year's Snapshot.
 - Meena Shahi indicated that while she was at the Arizona Department of Health Services, the Snapshot was used in application for grant funding and was provided to those individuals conducting their federal site visit.
 - Jeanne Blackburn indicated that she would ask people who have used the report to notify her of their thoughts on which parts were helpful and which could be changed to make the document more accessible.
- Steve Gendler indicated that his section will be necessarily shortened as some of the indicators on the outline for the Arizona Department of Public Safety are no longer collected.
- Meena Shahi indicated that, because she is no longer employed by the Arizona Department of Health Services, that she will not be able to contribute to the section on the outline specific to systems change.
 - The group discussed the section and agreed that it does not belong in this report, but may be a separate report at a future time by the group. Within the Snapshot, Systems Change will be discussed in the section on Data Gaps in order to discuss the changes that have already occurred as a result of Executive Order 2008-01 that address data gaps in child welfare data.
- Jeanne Blackburn asked the group members if they wanted to keep the sections in the outline on need, without receipt, for substance abuse treatment for alcohol and illicit drugs and/or differences in illicit drug use by ethnic and age category.
 - The group consensus was that these areas would be retained but in a concise manner using only a couple of graphs and minimal text accompanying the figures, with the data gap being that until we are better able to capture data on race/ethnicity, we will not be able to consistently report on differences by these categories.
- Gowri Shetty indicated that her program (Tobacco Education Prevention Program) is currently training individuals to conduct interviews by going into their communities to identify data sources in their community (a community profile), both those specific to tobacco as well as those for other drugs. She noted that this will begin as a collection of qualitative data, but she hopes that it will become a community-level set of indicators as the project progresses and indicated that she hopes that this will begin to address some of these identified data gaps.
- Phillip Stevenson asked the group to discuss deadlines for data submission for the document.
 - The group agreed that the data used would be on a fiscal year basis.
 - Jeanne Blackburn will provide the group members with a template for data submission, to ensure that it is all in a similar format, and thus, easier to manipulate.
 - Though Jeanne still needs to contact Melissa Thomas of the Arizona Department of Health Services for data from the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), the deadlines for data submission for all other agencies was set for 09/30/08.



Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership: Update

- Phillip Stevenson updated the group on the June 26th meeting of the ASAP:
 - Arizona is participating in an 8-state anti-methamphetamine collaborative/initiative.
 - Updates to the four strategic focus areas were given.
 - Phillip presented to the ASAP on prescription drug abuse trends seen in the AYS.
 - The Project Investment Justification Substance Abuse Policy (PIJSAP) process was discussed at the ASAP meeting.
 - A PIJSAP is required for any agency budgetary request in excess of \$500,000. The institutionalization of this process makes ASAP the body with the responsibility for reviewing PIJSAP proposals and making recommendations about whether these projects should receive funding.
 - Two projects submitted PIJ documents to ASAP:
 - 2010 Arizona Youth Survey
 - Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. (\$2.5 million) for the Arizona Department of Economic Security, brought to ASAP by Karen Bulkeley.

Emerging Issues Subcommittee: Update

- David Choate updated the group on the July 10th meeting of the Emerging Issues Subcommittee, noting that the group is in the process of streamlining its role and its deliverables, making sure that these documents are of importance and use to member agencies.
 - The current projects (i.e., Spotlight Reports) are being completed.
 - The Canary Survey will be moving forward and will become one of the major areas of focus for the group.
 - Focus groups will continue to be a product of the group.



Epi Work Group and Social Indicators Project: Partnership?

- Phillip Stevenson informed the group that this topic was discussed at the ASAP meeting.
- Jeanne Blackburn provided the group with information about the Social Indicators Project through ASU and indicators of interest to the Governor's Children's Cabinet that may be included in the Social Indicators Project.
- Jeanne asked the group to contribute their thoughts on which indicators of substance abuse would be helpful/beneficial to the Social Indicators Project.
 - David Choate mentioned the importance of including whether a student has carried a gun to school as an indicator for this project because even if infrequently occurring, any weapons at school is an immediate and serious concern.
- The group asked whether this project is specific to youth data or whether it is inclusive of both youth and adult indicators.
 - Jeanne Blackburn indicated that the project is not specific to youth as it is intended to give the public an overview of the state and its inhabitants and some of the Children's Cabinet indicators are concerned with factors that affect youth but aren't necessarily those affecting only youth (e.g., number of families helped to achieve home ownership).

Community Epidemiology Work Group: Update on January, 2008 Meeting in CA

- Due to time limitations, this presentation was tabled until the September meeting, at which time, Dr. James Cunningham will also present information on trends in methamphetamine hospital admissions.

Call to Public

- There were members of the public present. However, there were no comments from the guests in attendance.

Adjourn at 3:05 p.m. with a reminder on the agenda that the next meeting will be held on September 17, 2008.

Minutes submitted by Jeanne Blackburn (GOCYF, DSAP).